



## Hand, Foot, and Mouth Season

Severe Hand, Foot, and Mouth Disease Associated with Coxsackievirus A6 — Alabama, Connecticut, California, and Nevada, November 2011–February 2012

Recorded: April 3, 2012; posted: April 5, 2012

[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

As the seasons change and the weather warms, the chances of getting the common childhood illness, hand, foot, and mouth disease, increases. It typically occurs in summer and fall, mostly among children younger than five.

Dr. Eileen Schneider is a medical epidemiologist with CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases. She's joining us today to discuss ways to prevent hand, foot, and mouth disease. Welcome to the show, Eileen.

[Dr. Schneider] Thank you.

[Dr. Gaynes] Eileen, what exactly is hand, foot, and mouth disease?

[Dr. Schneider] It's a common disease in the United States caused by a family of viruses and should not be confused with foot and mouth disease which is seen in livestock.

[Dr. Gaynes] Which age groups are most commonly affected by hand, foot, and mouth disease?

[Dr. Schneider] Most of the times, you'll see it affecting children, however, adults can be affected by it. Recently, we've had outbreaks throughout different states and one of the features we've seen with these outbreaks is that more commonly, we'll see adults affected than we'd normally see.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are the symptoms of hand, foot, and mouth disease?

[Dr. Schneider] Most people are asymptomatic but, when they do have symptoms, they're usually mild. They'll have a fever, they'll have a rash on the palms of their hands and soles of their feet, as well as perhaps the rest of their body, and they may have blister-like lesions on the skin, as well as in their mouth.

[Dr. Gaynes] How is it treated?

[Dr. Schneider] There's no specific treatment for hand, foot, and mouth, however, you treat the symptoms. Most of the symptoms are mild, however, we've had recent outbreaks throughout the United States where people have had more severe symptoms,

and for that, people will have to go see their health care provider. Some cases have required hospitalization for pain management, as well as the blister-like lesions on their skin.

[Dr. Gaynes] What are some strategies for preventing hand, foot, and mouth disease?

[Dr. Schneider] Since hand, foot, and mouth disease is transmitted by coughing, sneezing, or encountering unsanitary conditions, maintaining good hygiene is very important, and this includes frequent hand washing, as well as covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing, as part of good respiratory etiquette.

[Dr. Gaynes] Eileen, where can listeners get more information about hand, foot, and mouth disease?

[Dr. Schneider] Well, they can go to the CDC web page – <u>www.cdc.gov</u> – and in the search box, type in 'HFMD' for hand, foot, and mouth disease.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Eileen. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Eileen Schneider about ways to avoid getting hand, foot, and mouth disease.

Remember, the disease is transmitted by coughing, sneezing, or encountering unsanitary conditions. Good hygienic practices, such as hand washing and keeping living areas clean, are the best ways to prevent hand, foot, and mouth disease.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for A Cup of Health with CDC.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.